

## **Results from FERC eGov Services Survey July 27, 2007**

Earlier this year (April 18 through May 15) we conducted a survey of user satisfaction with FERC eGov services. We would like to thank each of the 450 people who took the time to provide us with feedback. Respondents were generally satisfied with the services, though we received many constructive suggestions for improvement. Following are the survey results, including many of the comments we received along with our plans for acting on them.

If you responded to the survey, recognize one of your comments, and would like to provide us with additional information (or if you have any comments for us regardless of whether you participated in the survey), please email [ferconlinesupport@ferc.gov](mailto:ferconlinesupport@ferc.gov) or call FERC Online support at 866-208-3676.

### **Summary of Results**

- 80% have been using the services for more than one year;
- 88% use the services weekly, 61% daily;
- Services are, overall: Excellent - 24%, Very Good – 52%, Satisfactory – 20%, Poor – 2%;
- Timeliness and accuracy is: Excellent - 19%, Very Good – 53%, Satisfactory – 21%, Poor – 3%;
- Responsiveness and ease-of-use is: Excellent - 16%, Very Good – 48%, Satisfactory – 27%, Poor – 8%;
- On-line help is: Excellent - 7%, Very Good – 19%, Satisfactory – 22%, Poor – 6%, Don't Know – 46%;
- eMail/Phone help is: Excellent - 10%, Very Good – 16%, Satisfactory – 17%, Poor – 5%, Don't Know – 52%;
- Positive general comments tended to compare FERC favorably with other government sites;
- Negative general comments tended to identify ease-of-use.

### **eLibrary Comments**

- Several comments noted that we need to publish documents in eLibrary more quickly.
  - Response – The implementation of eFiling 7.0 late this calendar year and later eTariff will reduce publication times since we are much faster posting electronic documents than paper documents we have to scan. Submissions of material on CD/DVD that adhere to our recently-published 'Submission Guidelines for CDs, DVDs, and other electronic media' significantly reduce our processing time. Also, we have recently consolidated document handling staff and hope to make some process improvements that will

reduce processing time. However, since we assign docket numbers to documents before publishing them in eLibrary, some documents that require exceptional docketing decisions will always take longer to publish.

- Several comments suggested we make more documents on microfilm available on-line.
  - Response – We are currently digitizing eLibrary microfilm documents and publishing them on-line as requests are made for them. One commenter requested that orders issuing licenses or exemptions in the early 1980s be made available on-line. We will work toward that goal. We currently have no plans to digitize pre-1981 documents that are not on microfilm.
- A couple comments noted the inconvenience of eLibrary being unavailable for maintenance over an entire weekend.
  - Response – We are migrating eLibrary documents to a different storage sub-system that will allow us to greatly reduce the duration of planned outages and plan to complete that migration by the end of this calendar year.
- A couple comments noted that documents are sometimes classified as Critical Energy Infrastructure Information (CEII) or Non-public (confidential) improperly and the process to request their re-classification is burdensome.

Response – FERC relies on filers to accurately classify and label the availability level of their submissions, based on the definitions at <http://www.ferc.gov/legal/ceii-foia/ceii/classes.asp> and in 18 CFR. If you are aware of commonly misclassified documents or repeat offenders, please let us know.
- We received several comments noting problems using the document viewer.
  - Response – The document description for each document on search results pages is a hyperlink that launches the viewer and fetches the document to be viewed. The viewer is third-party software we selected based on viewing functionality for TIFF (scanned paper) documents and the ability to quickly stream only the parts of the document selected for viewing to provide quicker viewing of large documents. In the future we will upgrade or replace that third-party software, though we don't yet have a timetable established. Until then we suggest that those users who experience problems using that software use one of the 'Files' hyperlinks on the right side of the search results page to download or open the document rather than viewing it.
- Several comments about searching eLibrary lead us to believe that some existing capabilities are not known or fully understood:

- “One improvement I can recommend is a better keyword search." similar to Google's where one can put in multiple strings with quotations. This would help information search.”

“Key words, not just docket numbers, would improve search functionality. Aren't words easier to remember than docket numbers when you're in a hurry?”

“It's difficult to learn how/where to search for certain documents...I think a 'tips' section under 'eLibrary' would be useful. Also, 'General Search' and 'Advanced Search' rarely succeeding in finding the document I'm looking for. Please improve these search engines. Thanks.”

- Response – The Advanced Search page <http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/search/fercadvsearch.asp> ‘Text Search:’ entry field allows multiple strings with or without quotations (e.g. “East Fork” AND Ameren) as well as several other features (e.g. NOT, OR, NEAR/N, Paragraph, Sentence, Soundex, Many, Order, and Ranking)--note the ‘Search Tips’ link to the right of the Description/Full Text check boxes ([http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/Help/eLibrary\\_search\\_tips.htm](http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/Help/eLibrary_search_tips.htm)).
- “There ought to be a way in eLibrary where, if you know the citation but not the docket number, you can go to the case.”
  - Response – The Advanced Search page ‘FERC Cite’ entry field allows you to search for a citation (e.g. 120FERC61,028 ).
- “I use the e-library occasionally each year. I work for a Co-op G&T that is not regulated so most of the time if an issue comes up I don't know the docket number. I basically know the name of the company and potentially the issue. In searching your e-library, it is very docket number oriented. I would like for you to add to your general search parameters potentially the name of the company as an option if the docket number is not known. I know you have a text search capability but many times, a utility is referenced in other proceedings so you get alot of hits which are not related to the company or issue of the company you are looking for. I know that FERC regulated companies filings are all given docket numbers but w/o a docket no. it is very hard to find the filing you are searching for.”

“It is sometimes difficult to search the library for dockets involving a particular company.”

“Would like more search features on e-library other than issuance or submittal. Would be nice to have a feature where you could choose submittals by the original filing company.”

“There are times when I am asked to find information where I am only given a topic name such as 'capacity release'. It is almost impossible to locate information on your site without knowing the Docket Number that is driving it.”

- Response – The Advanced Search page ‘Affiliation’ (under ‘Author/Recipients’) entry field allows you to search for a company name or part of a company name (e.g. Missouri Coalition for the Environment or just Missouri). Also, information can be entered in multiple entry fields (e.g. capacity release in ‘Text Search’ and Piedmont in ‘Affiliation’)
- “Make it easier to find documents when you don't know the docket number. A list of new or active dockets (number, party, subject) would be helpful”
  - Response – The Daily Filings/Issuances Search ([http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/FDR\\_search.asp](http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/FDR_search.asp)) and New Dockets Search (<http://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/NewDockets.aspx>) provide such lists.
- “When I perform a search that provides too many hits and I go back to the search page to refine the search parameters I have to re-enter the search from scratch. It would be nice for the page to have the option to save the last search when I go back and just modify certain parts of it.”

“It would be nice if eLibrary was a little smarter about saving your search (for example, when return to search screen from results).”

“Id really like to see a 'search within results' function added which would let you incrementally drill down to find the information you're looking for, especially when performing text searches across a regulated industry sector for issue specific information. Another nice enhancement would be to maintain your last search criteria after you've opened a few files and decide you need to go back and refine your search at the top level (which is really the only way to drill down in the current system that I know of). This works if you haven't opened any files from your initial search but once you do, the search criteria is wiped clean so you have to remember your last search criteria to reenter and refine it. Finally, I'd like to be able to set defaults on the search screens rather to only have the system defaults presented each time I open the search window but this is merely for convenience - please work on my 2 suggestions above first! In my case I'd likely set the file results window to '200' and the timeframe to 'all' since this seems to be the settings I use the most.”

- Response – At the bottom of the Search Results Page, in the middle

of the page there is a 'Search Options' dropdown selection. Click the down arrow to the right of 'Search Options' then click on the 'Refine Search' option then click the 'Go' button to the right of that down arrow.

To save searches, use the 'Save Search' button on the top, left of the Search Results page, directly over 'Hits:' count. The Search Results Page and the Search Page used to get those results will be saved as a favorite in your browser.

- “In e-library's daily issuances function, it's very difficult to keep track of new postings. Is it possible to put new things at the top? Is it also possible to put a time of a posting? Thanks for considering these things.”

“need more choices to narrow down what we are searching for - like new dockets should have a choice of electric/gas/etc.”

- Response – For the first case, use either the General or Advanced Search, select issuances and specify a date range of one day, then after submitting the search, at the bottom of the Search Results Page use the 'Sort Options' dropdown selection to select 'Accession No. (desc)' then click the 'Go' button to the right of that down arrow. Posting Time is displayed on the Document Information page for each document which is displayed from the Search Results Page using the 'INFO' link on the right side of the page.  
For the second case, use either the General or Advanced Search, select issuances and submittals, specify a date range of a limited number of days, and use the 'Library' check boxes to limit the results to a specific industry or industries.
- “E-library would be tremendously improved by moving all image files to PDF, word, Word Perfect, or other searchable format that can be efficiently downloaded.”
  - Response – Though we hope to receive more submissions in electronic format, we have a very large number of scanned documents. We have recently improved download performance. The most efficient way to download large, scanned documents is to click the 'Files' checkbox to the left of the 'Image' link on the Search Results page, then click the down arrow to the right of 'Select an Action' dropdown on the left side of the page, then click on the 'Download' option and then click the 'Go' button to the right of the 'Self-Extracting Zip dropdown. Click yes when warned about download times and click save at the file open/save dialogue. The result will be a multi-page TIFF viewable with Microsoft Office Document Imaging and other common image viewing tools. If you

don't need the entire document, go to the File List and specify the range of pages you want to be downloaded. In RM07-16-000 we request comments about requiring that all PDF files filed with the Commission be text searchable.

- “It is hard to find the public part of CP applications, ie the application itself.”
  - Response – Use the Advanced Search page, enter the time period for your search and CP07\* in the ‘Docket’ entry field, pick Application/Petition/Request at the ‘Class:’ dropdown selection, and check the box to the left of “public” in the “availability” section at the bottom of the Advanced Search page. From the Results page there will be a link to ‘Document Components’ if the public material is part of a larger filing. Click on that link to view the components by their availability.
- “The FERC should have a separate category to search for Notices, such as for Sunshine notices, in the e-library, so I do not have to go through all the issuances in gas, electric, hydro etc.”
  - Response - Use the Advanced Search page, enter sunshine in the ‘Text Search:’ entry field and pick Notice ‘Class:’ dropdown selection.
- A few comments mentioned that search results are sometimes not correct.
  - Response – Please ensure your search covers the period you want, rather than just the default period. If you are doing a full text search of the document/file itself, remember that some files (such as audio and video files, image files, scanned PDF (image) files, maps, subsequent sheets in a spreadsheet, microfilm, etc.) are not text searchable. The descriptions for those materials are text searchable. If your search results are not correct, please use the ‘Save Search’ function noted directly above, right-click on the favorite in your browser, and email the search to [ferconlinesupport@ferc.gov](mailto:ferconlinesupport@ferc.gov) with an explanation so we can provide you with assistance or diagnose the problem.
- We will change the note about entering docket numbers on the Docket, General, and Advanced Search Pages to include a reminder that hydro project numbers must be prefixed with ‘P-‘.
- We received a few comments about downloads being slow and intermittently not working.
  - Response – We implemented system changes on May 22 and June 28 that we believe have reduced download times and made them more uniform.

Download speeds are, however, directly affected by file sizes and we have tried to balance ease of filing (allowing larger files) with ease of downloading.

- We received a comment about the quality of scanned documents.
  - Response – We occasionally receive paper documents that are in poor condition. We try to work with what is submitted to a reasonable extent rather than asking for resubmissions. The quality you see on eLibrary is a direct result of the condition of what is submitted to us.
- We received a couple comments noting that text in notices of filing has become shorter (one of the comments specifically mentioned notices of RP filings) and no longer includes the same amount of descriptive information from the actual filing.
  - Response – In order to issue notice of filings faster, improve the information they convey, and reduce Federal Register publication costs, we have been issuing Combined Notice of Filings for some filing types. The combined notice has convenient hyperlinks to each filing being noticed and the Docket Sheet for that filing. Here is a link to a combined notice issued on July 10  
[http://elibrary.ferc.gov:0/idmws/File\\_List.asp?document\\_id=13521651](http://elibrary.ferc.gov:0/idmws/File_List.asp?document_id=13521651) ). We plan on issuing Combined Notice of Filings for RP filings as well in the near future.
- We received two comments about confusion created by the various file types and links available for each document.

“It is confusing to have the different ways to access documents in eLibrary such as the FERC generated PDF, and the other ways; also it seems like the same document is frequently listed several times when you do a search which makes it harder to figure out if you've gotten what you are looking for”

“Getting to some of the documents can be circuitous (FILE). Suggest you indicate what sort of info would be at each type of link.”

- Response – Generally, for documents submitted on paper to FERC you will always see for each document on the right side of the Search Results page an ‘Image’ file and a ‘FERC Generated PDF’. The ‘Image’ file is a multi-page TIFF from our scanning operation and the ‘FERC Generated PDF’ is a PDF rendition we create with ‘best effort’ using an automated process. The ‘FERC Generated PDF’ is text-searchable, the ‘Image’ file is not. For documents submitted through eFiling or CD/DVD you will see the native file (e.g. ‘Word’, ‘Excel’, ‘PDF’, etc.) submitted and a ‘FERC Generated PDF’ of one or more of the submitted files if we were able to successfully create one. Depending on the file type, the native files are usually text-

searchable. In RM07-16-000 we request comments about whether the Commission should continue to convert submitted native file formats into PDF format. For documents that we issue, you will normally see a 'Word', 'Text', and 'FERC Generated PDF' file. These are all versions of the same document. We use MS Word as our native word processing application, and the 'Word' file is the original document. We create the 'Text' and 'FERC Generated PDF' versions using an automated process for those who do not have MS Word.

The 'FILE' link for each document on the very right of the Search Results page provides an expanded file list to show you the names of the files. The 'INFO' link displays information about when the document was submitted or issued as well as the document index information used to store and search for the document.

### **eFiling Comments**

- We received several comments asking that we make eFiling easier to use.
  - Response – With eFiling 7.0 which is planned for release at the end of 2007 we are redesigning the user interface with the goal of improving ease-of-use. We also plan to introduce document-less intervention and web-form comments to simplify intervening and filing comments. Please comment on our eFiling proposed rulemaking in RM07-16-000.
- We also received several comments about increasing the document types qualified for eFiling.
  - Response – Our goal for eFiling 7.0 is to qualify all documents with the exception of sealed or protected documents, forms filed using FERC-provided eForms applications, and tariffs.
- We received one comment suggesting we allow eFilings received through 11:59pm to be considered filed that business day. Currently, documents received after 5:00pm are considered to be filed the next business day.
  - Response – We are considering that change for eFiling 7.0 and have invited comment on that change in RM07-16-000.
- We received a couple comments asking that we improve the quality of PDFs generated from eFiled documents.
  - Response – Though we are upgrading the third-party software we use to generate PDFs with eFiling 7.0, we have also asked in RM07-16-000 for comments on whether we should continue the practice of generating PDF renditions of eFiled documents at all. As the content and formatting of eFiled documents becomes more complex, we are concerned that our ability



to generate a representative PDF of most submissions will fall short. We must note that our goal is not a 100% success-rate for generating PDF renditions of submissions, but rather that we apply a best-effort.

### **eService Comments**

- We received several comments noting occasional inaccuracies on service lists, suggesting an easier process for changing one's own service list information, and noting that some email addresses in services lists are no longer valid.
  - Response – After eFiling 7.0 we will begin work on a release of eService for which we will consider adding functionality to maintain one's own service list status and information and we will consider implementing a process to expire inactive or invalid email addresses.
- We will consider incorporating the following suggestions into an eService release that we will begin work on after the release of eFiling 7.0:
  - “would love to find a way to have consolidated service lists on one sheet instead of downloading everyone and looking for duplicates”
  - “It would be helpful if we could search for names on service lists”
  - “it would be nice to find a way to put the hyphen in the zipcode plus four on the addresses”
- We received several comments noting eService and eSubscription email delivery delays.
  - Response – We believe we have now resolved delivery delay issues. We had intermittent problems with our notification process stopping unexpectedly and our monitoring of that process—this has been resolved. Also, on February 24 we implemented a database upgrade that adversely affected the delivery of eSubscription notification emails for some sub-docket-only subscriptions—this has been corrected. And, between June 4 and June 28 we experienced a problem with eService notifications for documents for some sub-dockets—this was also corrected.

### **eSubscription Comments**

- We will take into consideration the following comments when, after eFiling 7.0, we begin work on the next eSubscription release:
  - “an option should be provided to people who only want a single delivery each day of all filings in dockets they subscribe to”
  - “unsubscribe to just orders”
  - “Tracking only Electric NOPRs”
  - “e-subscribe to a company name”
    - Response – Because companies associated with documents in eLibrary are usually added as they appear on a given document,

there are often multiple synonyms for a given company. So we would have to use a soundex search which would result in extra notifications.

- “The links in the e-subscription emails seem to be linked to either the file information or the java-based viewer. They should be linked to the .pdf or other view.”
- “The esubscriptions interface is very tedious to use - especially when subscribing to multiple dockets at once”
- “Instructions are not always clear on how to do things you don't routinely do; for example, add a project to esubscription.”

### **eForms Comments**

- We received the following comment: “It would be nice if FERC Form 1's for all utilities that file were in one place on the website - perhaps a directory for each year.”
  - Response - Paragraph 11 on page <http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/eforms/form-1/viewer-instruct.asp> identifies how this is already available. We will advertise this more prominently.

### **Tariffs**

- Both the following capabilities are planned for eTariff in Docket No. RM01-5-000. We don't have an established timeline for deploying eTariff, but we will resume work on it as soon as the NAESB E-Tariff Subcommittee establishes a standard for the eTariff database. Until eTariff is available, it might be helpful to use the Advanced Search page, check the box to the left of ‘Electric’ under ‘Library:’, enter a company name in ‘Text Search’, pick Application/Petition/Request at the ‘Class:’ dropdown selection, and pick Tariff Filing at the ‘Type:’ dropdown selection.
  - “Would be helpful if FERC electric tariffs could be obtained through FERC website.”
  - “Some of the functions that were present in RIMS/CIPS were lost. For example, tracing tariff filings by company used to be MUCH easier. It would be extremely useful to have these same functions in eLibrary.”

### **ferc.gov Comments**

- We received a few specific comments about the ferc.gov website:
  - “With the ferc webcasts, the option to download the webcast should be made available.”
    - Response – Downloads of the audio of meetings are available, refer to

<http://www.ferc.gov/EventCalendar/EventDetails.aspx?ID=2759&CalendarType=%20&Date=6%2f21%2f2007&CalendarID=101> which has a link to <http://www.capitolconnection.gmu.edu/ferc/employee/fercemployee.htm>.

- “I would also like to be able to view documents regarding court cases.”
  - Response - This is currently available at Court Cases: Opinions (see <http://www.ferc.gov/legal/court-cases/opinions.asp>).
- “Some features (links) change their 'place' too often.”

“[it] ferc website has important information, but is hard to browse through to get the info I need”

- Response - Due to fast posting, archiving and/or architecture changes in the site, sometimes it is necessary to move the location of a file. We attempt to keep this practice to a minimum but sometimes it can not be avoided. We encourage use of the Search feature on FERC.gov, located at the top right of every page.
- “Information needs to be updated in a timely manner. For example, when looking at your project chart for pending preliminary permits, permit number 12777 is not visible, although I believe it has been submitted and filed”
  - Response - FERC.gov is updated continuously through out the day. We will make sure project tables are reviewed and updated weekly.

### **eMail and Phone Support Comments**

- Comments regarding interactions with support staff were generally positive. However, we received several comments noting that emails and phone messages are not replied to expeditiously.
  - Response – Currently our goal is to return all phone messages and emails within one business day. We would have to increase staffing to decrease that timeframe, but have no immediate plans to do so. We are, however, going to review the several contact points we have with a goal of consolidating them and providing more uniform support.